

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6223
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AMCONSUL DHARAN
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

UNCLAS MANAMA 1230

DEPT PASS USICA, USTS

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BEXP USTS BA US
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR INFO ON VISIT USA PROGRAM

1. BAHRAIN APPEARS TO BE A GOOD MARKET FOR A SMALL BUT FORMAL VISIT USA PROGRAM. SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF BAHRAINIS TAKE EXTENDED VACATIONS EACH SUMMER TO AVOID THE LOCAL HOT, HUMID CLIMATE. IN THE PAST THESE TRIPS WERE TO LEBANON AND TO A LESSER EXTENT TO LONDON. WITH LEBANON NO LONGER A LIKELY VACATION SPOT, INDIA, THE FAR EAST, SPAIN AND OTHER AREAS ARE TEMPORARILY FILLING THE GAP. MANY OF THE RELATIVELY SOPHISTICATED AND WEALTHY BAHRAINIS WHO HAVE REGULARLY VACATIONED IN LONDON AND OTHER EUROPEAN CITIES ARE NO LONGER CONFORTABLE THERE DUE TO THE ADVERSE PUBLICITY RESULTING FROM THE INFLUX OF LESS SOPHISTICATED NOVELLE RICHE ARABS. A FEW WEALTHY BAHRAINIS HAVE GONE TO THE U.S. WHERE THEY WERE PLEASANTLY SURPRISED AT OUR TOURISTIC OFFERINGS AND LOW COSTS.

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2. BAHRAIN HAS A VERY ACTIVE TRAVEL PROMOTION INDUSTRY WITH ONE LARGE FIRM MOVING INTO WHOLESALE PACKAGE TOURS. (FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THIS REGION.) A NUMBER OF BAHRAIN TRAVEL AGENTS HAVE OFFICES THROUGHOUT THE GULF REGION. THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT IF WE COULD DEMONSTRATE TO THESE AGENTS WHAT THE U.S. HAS TO OFFER, WE COULD OPEN A SIGNIFICANT REGIONAL MARKET FOR USA TOURISM. THIS CONCEPT HAS

BEEN DISCUSSED WITH PANAM AND TWA IN BAHRAIN WHO HAVE ENDORSED IT AND OFFERED FULL SUPPORT.

3. AS A SMALL POST WITH LIMITED MANPOWER, RESOURCES AND LIBRARY/DISPLAY AREA WE WOULD HAVE TO CAREFULLY ASSESS ANY VISIT USA PROGRAM TO AVOID OVERCOMMITMENT. WE WOULD APPRECIATE BY CABLE A SUMMARY OF SUPPORT OFFERED BY USTS AND USICA FOR THIS TYPE OF PROGRAM, INCLUDING A SUMMARY OF PUBLISHED MATERIAL AVAILABLE. WE ALREADY HAVE A REQUEST FOR POSTER/DISPLAY MATERIAL FROM BRITISH AIRWAYS TO SUPPORT ITS OWN VISIT USA PROMOTION WITH LOCAL TRAVEL AGENTS WHEN IT STARTS A BAHRAIN TO NEW YORK TIE-IN OF ITS CONCORDE SERVICE VIA LONDON. OUR SUPPORT FOR THIS PROMOTION WILL BE LIMITED AS WE HAVE SO LITTLE MATERIAL. WE WOULD ALSO REQUEST THAT COPIES OF ANY RECENT GUIDANCE FOR A VIST USA PROGRAM BE MAILED TO THE ECONOMIC/ COMMERCIAL OFFICER, AMERICAN EMBASSY, FPO NEW YORK 09526 AS OUR FILES CONTAINED VIRTUALLY NO PAST GUIDANCE.

4. AS SOON AS EMBASSY RECEIVES A RESPONSE WE PLAN TO INVITE PANAM, TWA AND SELECT TRAVEL AGENTS TO A MEETING TO DETERMINE WHAT WE MIGHT DO TO JOINTLY PROMOTE THIS MARKET. WE WILL USE BUSINESS TRAVEL TO MEETINGS AND EXHIBITIONS AS A MAJOR SELLING POINT.

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